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Almudena Moreno Mínguez  
Editor

# Family Well-Being

## European Perspectives

 Springer

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

**Almudena Moreno Mínguez**

In recent years, there has been extensive research into the subject of changes in the family, particularly into family structures and typologies, demographic and economic dynamics, the repercussions of the progressive entry of women into the workplace and the different family policies enacted by the various welfare states. In fact, the family has taken on a key role in comparative economic and sociological theory since the 1980s (Castles 1998; Esping Andersen 2009; Ferrera 2005). However, the conceptualisation and empirical research into the topic of ‘family well-being’ (McKeown and Sweeney 2001), within the area of family change and well-being, is a topic which has barely been analysed in sociological and economic treatises on the family (Jordan 2008).

On this basis, an OECD working paper, for example, introduced the concept of equitable and sustainable ‘well-being’ (Hall et al. 2010). According to this approach, human well-being consists of both individual and social well-being, and it is embedded in culture, the economy and governance (Kroll 2011). Moreover, the human system must always be considered in relation to the ecosystem and its interactions with it. Important cross-cutting themes in determining the well-being of a society also include (a) fair distribution and (b) sustainability with regard to the available resources. It is also important to add that the concept of quality of life is traditionally measured by means of so-called ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ indicators (Noll 2004). The first provide external descriptions of people’s conditions of life, while the second is based on direct questioning of people concerning how satisfied they are with their lives overall and with particular aspects (such as work or family). Taking this conceptual basis of well-being as a reference, the general objective of this book is to collate, using different theoretical and methodological approaches,

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## Chapter 6

# Parental Leave Policies, Gender Equity and Family Well-Being in Europe: A Comparative Perspective

Karin Wall and Anna Escobedo

### Introduction

Leave policies and the protection of working parents' rights have changed significantly in Europe during the last few decades. While policies introduced immediately after World War II were largely based on a male-breadwinner model, the post-1970s policies have recognised the increase in maternal employment, the growing diversity of work/family arrangements and working parents' needs for state support in caring for young children. Paid maternity leave and paid or unpaid parental leave are now available throughout Europe – Western, Central and Eastern – and policy developments have encouraged more gender-neutral leaves and longer periods of paid leave (Deven and Moss 2005).

Two questions may be raised regarding the changing nature of leave policies. The first is whether these changes have shifted policy away from the male-breadwinner model, thereby reinforcing gender equity both in employment and in care work. Welfare state literature and feminist literature aiming to incorporate gender into the former reveal complex and often contradictory consequences of leave policies. Paid leave schemes and childcare services are generally seen to strengthen women's ties to paid work (Ruhm 1998; Glass and Riley 1998) by raising female employment rates, reducing new mothers' labour-market exits, and decreasing their job turnover.

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On the other hand, leave provisions, in particular, of longer duration, are also shown to have negative effects on women's employment by eroding their human capital and making them less attractive to employers, when compared to the male workforce (Morgan and Zippel 2003; Bergman 2009). The debate on what constitutes a gender-friendly state also reveals different approaches, with some scholars emphasising the extent to which states support women's economic independence (Sainsbury 1999) while others underline the role of the state in granting women entitlements to 'time for care' and recognising women's preferences (Knijn and Kremer 1997). 'Employment' and 'care' perspectives do not necessarily clash. As some literature has pointed out, the impact of longer and more generously paid periods of leave does not always have clear-cut effects. Moreover, recent analysis of changes in leave policies in Europe shows that the trend towards more generosity in leave does not necessarily increase gender equality (Wall 2007a; Ray et al. 2010; Thévenon 2011). In fact, generosity and gender egalitarianism emerge as different dimensions and have to be analysed separately.

The second question is whether these changes have resulted in cross-national convergence or divergence and also, in the case of dispersion, if the clustering of countries is linked to the typology of welfare regimes proposed by welfare studies (Esping-Andersen 1990). Comparative analysis on the convergence of leave policies in industrialised countries has shown that, in spite of some common trends and some long-standing broad geographical patterns, these changes have had different levels of magnitude across countries and have consequently maintained or even increased divergence (Gauthier 2002; Thévenon 2011). Moreover, the fourfold typology of welfare regimes, in spite of its usefulness in highlighting differences across policy regimes, is not clearly visible. More importantly, it does not help us to fully understand the processes of variation within and across groups of countries.

These two questions imply a third challenge which is taken up in this chapter. If the nature of leave policy is changing and traditional welfare state analysis does not adequately account for variation, then it is important to understand what else is shaping the maintenance of diversity. The approach developed in this chapter suggests that there are different *leave policy models* underpinning developments in leave in European societies. Drawing on some fundamental dimensions of the work-care-leave-gender conundrum, both at the level of policies and of changing expectations and practices, we will seek to identify this diversity. Two issues are of particular significance. First, what processes of change in cultural norms and social practices, related to motherhood, fatherhood and work-family balance after the birth of a child, may be identified in European policies and societies? Secondly, how does gender equity in employment and care interact with leave policy generosity in these processes?

In the next section, we discuss the methodological framework. In the third section, we describe the models. In the last section, we look at the usefulness of such an approach to understand major trends and cross-national differences in leave policies in Europe.

## Methodology and Data

An explorative analysis of contemporary 'leave policy models' will be carried out on the basis of an interpretative approach which seeks to identify a diversity of empirically based ideal types by looking at some fundamental dimensions of work-leave-gender policies, culture and practices. Selection of three main analytical dimensions took into account the literature addressing the complex interplay between leave systems and work-family, gender and welfare regimes.

### Leave Systems

Many comparative studies have tackled the task of describing leave systems across countries. Analyses have focused on one main indicator, the generosity of leave, by examining the duration and the type of job-protected leave. Recent studies have gone beyond this approach by examining payment (level of compensation or full-time equivalent) and the degree of gender equity. In this chapter, we will draw on four interrelated indicators (Tables 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, and 6.7). First, since unpaid leave is known to have extremely low take-up rates, we will look at total *post-natal paid* leave<sup>1</sup> as well as *well-paid* leave within the former. Two other indicators concern the *degree of individualisation* (individual and non-transferable versus family entitlement to leave) and *gender equity*. Father's specific entitlements (through paternity leave, the father's quota or the bonus in the duration of leave when shared by the two parents) and flexibility regarding who may use leave will be examined as measures of gender equity; outcomes (e.g. father's take-up rates) will be examined when available. Finally, it is important to consider whether gender equity is a major objective of leave policy and to understand this in the context of each country's *specific pathway* regarding gender equality and the leave system.

### Gender and Work/Family Models

To understand the meanings of 'leave', it is important to analyse interconnections between leave systems and other areas of family life and policy such as the articulation between work and care. Expectations and policies related to gender roles and work-family balance may be more or less supportive of working parents and usually emphasise different perspectives on how children should be cared for during the leave period.

<sup>1</sup>Including the compulsory paid weeks of post-natal leave for mothers and the paid weeks which may be taken after that.

At least two important variables may be seen to underpin the social construction of gender roles in work/family articulation.<sup>2</sup> The first is related to the *conjugal division of work* (who should work outside the home, who should care for young children, who actually does so and whether paid work is full time or part time). For example, strong agreement with the ideal of the husband as provider and the wife as secondary provider (part-time work) makes it difficult for the mother not to assume her conventionally assigned role of main childcarer (Crompton 1999). The second concerns the *social construction of motherhood* and how it is seen to relate to fatherhood (Leira 1992; McMahon 1995; Pfau-Effinger 1999). Motherhood may be interpreted as a long phase of life in which the special tasks of caring totally absorb women's capacity for work, thereby excluding employment altogether or reducing it for some years, or as a life stage which does not absorb women's capacity for work so that maternal employment does not have a negative impact on children and should be managed alongside childcare responsibilities which are shared with the father.

There is substantial literature on changing work-family models during the last few decades in European societies. Some of this literature suggests a more or less linear move from the male-breadwinner model towards a dual-earner/dual-carer model, while other identifies a shift towards an 'adaptive' model where women's preferences go towards part time or no employment while children are young (Treas and Widmer 2000; Hakim 2003). In contrast with these perspectives, other approaches have highlighted a diversity of models. Viewing Western European development over the last few decades, Pfau-Effinger (1999) identifies five gendered cultural models, two more traditional and three modern. Cross-national analysis of attitudes and practices related to the gendered division of paid and unpaid work has also highlighted a plurality of models (Wall 2007b; Aboim 2010).

In order to capture diversity in work-family models, it is important to consider a variety of data since female employment rates may be biased by including or excluding women who are on parental or childcare leave according to national regulations (e.g. in Finland, women on parental leave are considered as employed but inactive when they are on childcare leave while receiving a home-care-related allowance). Besides female employment rates and part-time work, it is essential to look at cultural expectations and recent policy debates, as well as differences in the activity rates of women with and without children and the gendered divisions of work in couples with children below 3.

<sup>2</sup>The concept of 'work/family articulation' refers to the processes and practices whereby individuals and families develop specific strategies to manage paid and unpaid work. The latter may include cutting back on working hours, taking leave, adapting parents' work schedules or delegating care for young children to professional or informal carers. 'Reconciliation' and 'balancing' are terms currently used to analyse this process. But they can imply that some form of conciliation or equilibrium between the two spheres is always achieved, and this represents an analytical drawback. We therefore prefer the more neutral concept of 'articulation' between work and family life.

### *Welfare Regimes and the Leave-Services Connection*

A third dimension is the social construction of *the relationship between working parents and the Welfare State*. In European society, there are different ideological frameworks regarding this relationship. From one point of view, care for children may be regarded primarily as a responsibility of the state. The underlying ideal is that children are future citizens; therefore, public institutions are seen as competent in fulfilling the task of care and early education. Caring for children, however, may alternatively be considered as primarily the task of families – the underlying attitude being that children are seen as needing special care (by parents or especially by the mother) to become competent individuals. This ideological framework is strong in Central and Eastern Europe but may also be found in other countries and is part of an on-going policy debate on family well-being in all European countries (Esping-Andersen 2003). One of the main consequences of this debate for policies is the stronger or weaker emphasis on state responsibility in supporting working parents through day care services (adapted to parents' working hours). The linkages established between the leave system and access to services (e.g. ensuring that day care is available when leave ends) are therefore of particular importance. Consideration of this dimension will be based on data concerning the intensity (average opening hours) and prevalence (coverage rates) of ECEC (early childhood education and care services), as well as developments in the coordination between the end of leave and services.

For the 22 countries under discussion,<sup>3</sup> we examined the comparative evidence describing variations in leave systems and their connections to the other dimensions. The models must be seen as exploratory. Research has shown that typologies have to be systematically reviewed since all models, rooted as they are in specific cultural and historical paths, are dynamic and may shift or even deviate substantially over time. In fact, trying to find some pattern in these variations, we previously identified five leave policy models which, seen in the light of recent changes, needed to be revised (Wall 2007a). As a result, we have added two other models. This does not mean that the number of models must be continually multiplied; new models may appear, but some models may also merge over time due to convergence. However, the 'non-fits' that only represent one or two countries are essential to understanding how new pathways and realities are emerging, within a larger context of both convergence and divergence. Given that the main reason for this typology is its usefulness in understanding diversity, the two models describe countries (Germany, Austria, Portugal) where recent changes have made them into interesting case types.

<sup>3</sup>Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Finland, Slovenia, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Poland, Estonia, Hungary, Czech Republic, Netherlands, UK, Ireland, Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece.

Data for the 22 countries on leave systems, ECEC services, maternal employment and couples' employment patterns were taken from the reviews and statistical data collected by the International Network on Leave Policy and Research, in particular, the Annual Reviews of the last 6 years (Moss and O'Brien 2006; Moss and Wall 2007; Moss and Korintus 2008; Moss and Fusulier 2009; Moss and Kocourková 2010; Moss 2011). Eurostat data was used for female employment rates and part-time work. Since the data is available on-line,<sup>4</sup> we only include the tables on leave systems which were drawn up for this chapter on the basis of the 2011 review.

## Leave Policy Models in Europe

### *The 'One-Year-Leave' Gender-Equality-Orientated Model*

The 'one-year-leave' model is associated with leave arrangements that provide approximately *one year of paid leave* (9–13 months) *with full or very high compensation of previous earnings* (Table 6.1). In the four countries (Sweden, Iceland, Denmark and Slovenia) that fit this model most closely, there is an initial short maternity leave followed by a longer period of well-paid parental leave which allows one of the parents (or both on a sharing basis) to stay at home for most of the first year of the child's life.

The *promotion of gender equality* in leave arrangements is *high* on the policy agenda. This is particularly true of Sweden and Iceland, with both countries putting a strong emphasis on a (non-transferable) father's quota of parental leave (2 months in Sweden, 3 months in Iceland), while in Denmark and Slovenia, we find 2 weeks of paternity leave (with 100% compensation of prior earnings) and an emphasis on the flexible gender sharing of leave. In Slovenia, for example, half of the 8 months of well-paid parental leave are for fathers even if they may be transferred to the mother; individualisation through individual entitlement to well-paid leave is therefore an important principle in this model and strongly related to gender equity in policy. Moreover, reinforcing gender equality typically leads to the introduction of mechanisms that act as incentives for fathers to take up more leave, for example, Sweden recently introduced a 'gender-equality bonus' in the form of a special tax reduction when 'equal use' of leave goes beyond the father's quota. Not surprisingly, father's take-up of parental leave is higher in the countries with a non-transferable father's quota (90% in Sweden and Iceland compared to 24% in Denmark and 6% in Slovenia).

Leave policy in these countries is also connected to governmental policies endorsing strong support for dual-earner parents through services. *Complementarity*

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.leave-network.org/> for the Annual Reviews and <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat> for data on female employment in 2010.

between the 1-year leave and day care services, emphasising the idea that the majority of children after age 1 are brought into formal care, is ensured through a high availability of services adapted to parents' working hours; coverage rates for children below age 3 in 2009 are the highest in all European countries: 63% in Sweden, 73% in Denmark, 41% in Iceland and 53.3% in Slovenia.

Lastly, the economic behaviour of women and of couples with young children underlines the *erosion of the 'male-breadwinner model'* in these countries and the growing importance of women's employment and dual-earner couples. Female economic employment rates are high, including more full-time than part-time female earners, and there is a similar employment rate for women with or without children below age 6. Maternal employment has the highest levels of all European countries: in 2008, in families with children below age 15, it was equal to or above 75% in all four countries (76.5% in Denmark, 84.8% in Iceland, 75.1% in Slovenia, 82.5% in Sweden).

Division of paid labour also confirms the decline in the one-earner model: in couples with children below age 3, the full-time dual-earner model in which both parents work full time is the predominant pattern (42% in Sweden, 71% in Slovenia) (Data for 2007, Moss 2011). Nevertheless, it is far from being a fully predominant model, even in these countries. When children are very young, the one-and-a-half-earner model, based on part-time work, is important and even seems to be on the increase. The explanation may be the gradual rise in female part-time work over the last decade.<sup>5</sup>

### *The 'Parental-Choice-Oriented' Policy Model*

The leave policy model that we have labelled the 'parental-choice-oriented' model emerged during the 1990s in the context of a difficult (and often heated<sup>6</sup>) policy debate centred on the need, advocated by some political parties and sectors of society, to allow parents to choose between caring for children below 3 years of age at home or putting them in day care. Under varied but often similar concepts – 'cash for care' (Norway), 'home care allowance' (Finland), 'cash benefit for parental education' (APE, France), 'time credit system' (Belgium)<sup>7</sup> – the countries that fit this model

<sup>5</sup> In 2010, women working part time represented 40% in Sweden, up from 36% in 2000; 39% in Denmark, up from 34% in 2000; 35% in Iceland; and 15% in Slovenia.

<sup>6</sup> See the article by Elin Kvande in the 2007 Review (Moss and Wall 2007) describing how the issue of long parental leave was hotly debated in Norway during the 1990s. The father's quota is also a much debated issue at present with the conservative party strongly in favour of doing away with it (Brandth and Kvande in Moss 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Belgium does not have a 'home care allowance' but entitlement to parental leave together with the 'time credit system' allows parents to take low-paid leave for another 18 months after the end of 4-month well-paid maternity leave.



most closely opened up their leave arrangements in order to provide parents with the *option of a long (2–3 years) paid parental leave*. However, prior to the introduction of this *low-paid long leave* (see the flat rates for each country in Table 6.2), these countries already had a well-paid leave of several months after the birth of the child (3–12 months<sup>8</sup>) as well as services which had expanded. In this context, the long parental leave was endorsed as an extra option for families rather than as the preferred form of care for young children.

As a result, a second characteristic of this leave policy model is a *complementary relationship between leave arrangements and childcare services*. Services are available as from the end of the initial well-paid leave so that parents who are entitled to the long parental leave can choose whether to take it or to go back to work and rely on day care. Supporting parental choice over the first 3 years after birth thus implies keeping up fairly high levels of service provision for this age group and adapting opening hours to parent's work schedules. Coverage rates in these countries in 2009 are therefore average to high: 33% in Belgium, 41% in France, 27% in Finland and 36% in Norway. Given their specific paths, France and Belgium provide services for children below age 1, thereby allowing for some 'early return to work (at the end of well-paid leave)' strategies based on the use of day care facilities, whereas Norway and Finland, as in Sweden (less so in Denmark<sup>9</sup>), only tend to provide services for children over age 1.<sup>10</sup>

Emphasis is thus on parental choice but *gender equality is also on the policy agenda*, even if less explicitly than in the previous model. In most of the countries, this implies providing well-paid paternity leave (2–3 weeks, with the exception of Norway, where paternity leave is not paid) and the possibility of gender sharing of the parental leave. Belgium has 3 days of 'compulsory' paternity leave. Finland provides 3 weeks of paternity leave (with a lower ceiling than for maternity leave, however) and an extra bonus of 4 weeks paid father's leave if the father takes the last 2 weeks of parental leave, while Norway, more in line with Sweden, has a father's quota of 10 weeks. However, although it is non-transferable, eligibility rules regarding

<sup>8</sup>Norway and Finland clearly have a more generous initial leave system, similar to the 'one-year-leave model', with a well-paid leave which can go up to 11 or 12 months. France and Belgium only have an initial well-paid maternity leave of 4 months.

<sup>9</sup>Denmark provides childcare services for children over 6 months.

<sup>10</sup>Even though in Finland children under one year old are 'entitled to a day care place', in practice, there are very few day care places for children of this age. As Salmi (2006) points out, parental leave ends when the baby is about 9–10 months old and the majority of mothers (80%) take home care allowance after this period and therefore rarely apply for a day care place. The average home care period lasts until the child is 1.5 years. This has led to a drop in places for this very young age group; in the 1970s, there even used to be separate sections for young babies in day care centres, but this no longer happens. As a result, if parents decide not to take the whole parental leave period, they usually consider other options, such as a private nanny at home.

the father's quota have been eased, allowing for fathers to take leave even if the mother is only working a low part time (less than half time). The change points to an emphasis on parental togetherness in leave and the 'one-and-a-half-earner' model rather than the promotion of gender equity through a father's individual entitlement to care which depends on mother's return to work.

In these countries, the economic behaviour of women and couples with young children also points to *a move away from the male-breadwinner model* but less pronounced than in the former model. Female employment rates are high in Finland (67%) and Norway (73%) and slightly lower in France (60%) and in Belgium (57%); female part-time work varies but is especially high in Belgium (42%) and Norway (43%) and somewhat lower in France (30%) and Finland (20%). However, in comparison with the countries in the previous model, maternal employment is always lower (between 64% and 69%).

On the other hand, there is a specific pattern of erosion of male breadwinning. Compared to the previous countries, the one-earner model is more important (with a third of couples in France and 46% in Finland falling into this type) in households with children under 3 years old. Although it is not a clearly predominant model as in the 'mother-centred' leave policy model (see section The 'Long-Leave' Mother Home-Centred Policy Model), it has average proportions, indicating that it is also a fairly common option in couples with young children. In summary, from the point of view of parental employment, the 'parental-choice-oriented' model still allows for a considerable amount of male breadwinning.

### *The 'Long-Leave' Mother Home-Centred Policy Model*

A third policy model can be identified which conforms strongly to the expectation that mothers should stay at home when children are very young. During the phases of active motherhood, in particular, when children have not yet started school, it is seen as important for mothers to stay at home and to gradually take up work again as the child gets older. In the four countries (Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia) which fall more closely into this model, leave policy is based on a *long-paid leave which emphasises maternal home care until the child is 3 years old* (Table 6.3). After an initial well-paid post-natal maternity leave (of 2–6 months), there is either a flat-rate payment for 2 (Poland) or 3 years (Czech Republic) or a more generous compensation for the first 18–24 months (see Hungary and Estonia) followed by a low flat-rate payment during the rest of the leave.

Emphasis on mother care for very young children provides linkages to three other characteristics of this model. First, there is *a low emphasis on gender equality in leave*. If women, at least when children are small, are primarily regarded as being responsible for childcare, then men are regarded as breadwinners who earn most of the income and should not be integrated into leave arrangements. Until recently, this

meant that well-paid paternity leave was not provided; the Czech republic still has no paternity leave, but the other countries have introduced a short (5–10 days) well-paid paternity leave, suggesting that some building up of parental, rather than just maternal, care has also become an objective of leave policy. There are, however, no protected periods of parental leave ('quotas') or bonus months exclusively for fathers when mothers return to work. When stipulated, periods of protected leave are for mothers rather than fathers: in Hungary, the first 6 months of parental leave have to be taken by the mother.

The second characteristic is a *low availability of childcare services* as the leave system and childcare facilities are not seen as complementary. The long period of leave is seen as an alternative to service provision, in particular for children below age 3. Coverage rates for this age group are therefore low, 7% in Hungary and 3% in Poland and the Czech Republic, but higher in Estonia (25%, up from 12% in 2006); and coverage rates for the 3–6 age group are also low to average (except in Estonia<sup>11</sup>).

The third characteristic is *emphasis on a male-breadwinner model when couples have small children*, making for a specific configuration of parental employment. Overall, female employment rates are average or even slightly above average, but maternal employment levels are low, and there are considerable differences between the activity rates of women with or without children below age 6. The difference is as high as 41 percentage points in the Czech Republic, 33 p.p. in Hungary, 26 p.p. in Estonia and 12 p.p. in Poland in 2009 (EC 2010). As a result, the employment status of couples with children is also very different. In couples with children below age 3, the male-breadwinner model is the predominant model, representing over 70% and as high as 80% in the Czech Republic; in Poland, however, it is not as predominant (44%), suggesting that the very low flat-rate payment for parental leave does not provide an option for many working mothers.

### ***The 'Balanced' Mother Home-Centred Policy Model***

Austria and Germany, in particular West Germany (Pfau-Effinger and Smidt 2011), have been seen to closely follow the culture and policy measures underlying the long-leave mother-centred policy model. Until 2007, both countries had a short well-paid leave of a few months followed by a low-paid long leave (2–3 years, mean-tested) which was taken up essentially by mothers. There was no paternity leave, and only Austria had established entitlement to 'bonus months' in case of parental sharing of leave (3–6 bonus months, depending on the shorter or longer duration of leave). Over the last few years, concern regarding low maternal employment and the negative effects of long-term labour-market absence led to critical

<sup>11</sup> Estonia's leave policies thus seem to be shifting and reveal some hesitation in relation to a mother-centred model.

appraisal of the long-leave model; in particular, it was seen to provide low support for qualified women wishing to reconcile work and care through shorter well-paid leave and reliance on services.

Recent changes in leave policy introduced more emphasis on income-related payment, shorter periods of leave and services (mainly childminders for the under 3s). Not surprisingly, the well-paid one-year-leave model may be seen to have acted as a benchmark, even if this is more visible in the German 'paradigm shift' than in the Austrian. Germany introduced 1 year of parental leave at 67% of prior earnings (with a ceiling of 1,800 euros) or 2 years at 33%; if fathers share the leave, there is a bonus of 2 or 4 months (Table 6.4). The change seems to represent a compromise between a radical shift towards a well-paid 'one-year-leave' system and the former long-leave system: it allows working women to choose between a fairly well-compensated leave of 12 months or a longer low-paid leave; in either case, however, it would seem to decrease dependency on a male income model. Data on take up indicates that the longer period is only taken up by 11% of leave takers, mostly women.

Austria carried out more modest changes by introducing in 2010 two new and more generous one-year-leave options, one of which is flat rate (for those earning below 1,000 euros) and the other income related (at 80% of previous income for those earning between 1 and 2 thousand euros); the bonus months depending on gender sharing of parental leave have been kept, and policy objectives – to reach 20% take up of fathers through the two new options – have been announced. Meanwhile, neither country has introduced paternity leave. However, the issue of childcare for children below age 3 is receiving attention. Childcare is decentralised in both countries, but some regions are promoting service provision. As a result, coverage rates are still low (10% in Austria, 19% in Germany) but gradually increasing.

Considering that attitudes to full-time maternal employment are generally negative and that gender models are slow to change, we may expect divisions of work to still conform strongly to male breadwinning and female caring or part-time work. Female employment rates are average in 2010 (66% in both countries), female part time is high (46% Germany, 44% Austria) and maternal employment is therefore not as low as in the previous model. In couples with children below age 3, the male-breadwinner model is the predominant pattern but the one-and-a-half model follows closely; in other words, in contrast to the long-leave model, these countries have partially moved away from male breadwinning.

We have labelled this as the 'balanced' mother-centred model due to fundamental changes in leave policies and employment patterns which reveal that a specific process of change is underway. Historically and culturally, the impact of the male-breadwinner model and a welfare regime centred on maternal care is still visible. But there is a search for a new balance between this framework and the opening up of more options for mothers, including return to work after a well-paid shorter period of leave and outsourcing some childcare; the objective of gender equity through father's involvement in care is proposed with moderation but is now an important aspect of policy and debate.

### *The Short-Leave 'Part-Time Mother' Policy Model*

This model strongly reflects what has been designated by some authors as a modernised version of the male-breadwinner pattern (Pfau-Effinger 1999). As in the preceding mother-centred models, women and men are to an equal degree integrated into employment as long as there are no dependent children in the household. However, rather than stay-at-home mothers, who are encouraged to use a long-leave arrangement, it is seen as adequate, during the phases of active motherhood, to combine work and childcare by working part time. The main social spheres for caring are the family and the market, with traditionally underdeveloped state provision of leave and services. Nevertheless, over the last decade, there have been some changes, in particular, in relation to the development of services.

Paid leave arrangements in the four countries (United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Ireland and Switzerland) which fit this model most closely are centred on one main type of leave: *a short, non-transferable maternity leave* which provides high compensation (70–100% with a ceiling, and a particularly low ceiling in Ireland, the only country with 6 months) for only 1–6 months (Table 6.5). In the UK and Ireland, this short paid leave is followed by some additional unpaid or low-paid maternity leave. In fact, recent extensions of maternity leave appear to be bringing these two countries nearer to the idea of an initial year of 'low-paid' or 'unpaid' home-based care by mothers as an alternative to early return to part-time work. On the other hand, there have been no significant developments in paid parental leave: Switzerland has no parental leave (under discussion at present), UK and Ireland have an unpaid parental leave of 3 months per parent, the Netherlands has a part-time parental leave of 6 months per parent (unpaid, but with tax reduction as an incentive).

Lastly, the promotion of *gender equality in leave arrangements is not high on the agenda*. Paternity leave has been introduced in the UK but with a flat-rate payment: the Netherlands has a very short paternity leave paid by the employer, and Ireland and Switzerland none at all. Moreover, the initial maternity leave is not gender flexible.

Emphasis on the need to increase female participation in the labour market in order to bring low income families out of poverty has led, over the last decades, to an *increased availability of part-time day care services*. Coverage rates for children below age 3 vary from a low 20% in Ireland (up from 15% in 2006) to 35% in the UK and 49% in the Netherlands; however, short opening hours are a key characteristic, in line with mother's part-time work. Nevertheless, in comparison with the long-leave mother-centred model, these coverage rates provide some complementarity between the leave system and care services, and promote a work-family model based on mother's part-time work.

The characteristics of female activity rates and of parental employment seem to confirm this, especially in the UK, Switzerland and the Netherlands. Female activity rates are high, close to or above the average EU value, but this includes female part-time work which has the highest levels in Europe: 77% in the Netherlands, 61% in

Switzerland and 43% in the UK; Ireland has a slightly diverging pattern within this model, with 35% of female part-time work. Maternal employment is average or high in the first 3 countries and somewhat lower in Ireland (indicating that many mothers are out of the labour market). Nevertheless, in contrast with the preceding model, it is *the one-and-a-half earner pattern*, rather than the male-breadwinner one, that is the predominant model in couples with children below age 3. In the Netherlands, 59% of couples with children this age are one-and-a-half earner couples, 19% are male-breadwinner couples and 6% are full-time dual-earner couples; in Switzerland, 39% are one-and-a-half earner and 37% male-breadwinner couples; in the UK, the proportions are respectively 35%, 33% and 21%.

### *The Short-Leave Modified 'Male-Breadwinner' Model*

A sixth policy model can be identified that conforms more strongly to the idea of the male-breadwinner/female home-carer pattern. Although expectations and attitudes to gender roles are changing rapidly in all Southern European countries, women have traditionally been regarded as being responsible for work in the private household, not only during the phases of active motherhood but also during married life in general, irrespective of whether the couple has children or not. In the three countries (Italy, Greece, Spain) that fit this model most closely, *male breadwinning is important in couples with and without children* and emerges, even if less clearly than in the past, as the predominant employment pattern amongst couples with children below age 3: 44% in Italy, 47% in Greece and 43% in Spain. The gap between the employment rates of women in the central age group with or without children below age 6 is low – 8 percentage points in Greece, 4 p.p. in Italy, 6 p.p. in Spain in 2009 – but this is due to high proportions of women, both with and without children, who are not engaged in the labour market; maternal employment rates are low, in fact similar to those of the long-leave model. Overall female employment rates continue to be amongst the lowest in Europe (46% in Italy, 52% in Spain, 48% in Greece). Part-time work is below average but is increasing in Spain and Italy, a trend which may be shifting some of the emphasis from male breadwinning to the one-and-a-half earner pattern.

Leave policy is based on *one main type of leave arrangement: a short (4–5 months) of very well-compensated leave for mothers*; the public sector in Greece, with 1 year of well-paid leave, must not be forgotten, but it is an exceptional situation, and we should be cautious in underlining overall generosity on the basis of this measure. As for parental leave, this is an unpaid or very low-paid individual entitlement. In Italy, since 2002, parents receive 30% of previous earnings when leave is taken to care for children below age 3 (unpaid when children are 3–8 years old): it is an individual entitlement (6 months per parent), but couples can only take a total amount of 10 months (Table 6.6). However, even low payment is associated with higher use: in Italy in 2005, 7.5% of men and 24.2% of women employees with at least one

child below age 8 used parental leave (Addabbo and Giovannini 2011), while in Spain, parental leave takers represent 6.9% of all births and 96% are mothers.

Gender equality in leave has not been a major guiding principle over the last few decades, leading to low emphasis on father's specific entitlements. In 2010, paternity leave either is not provided (Italy, Greece's public sector) or else is very short and paid by employers (Greek private sector); the exception is now Spain which, in the context of new gender-equality objectives, introduced 2 weeks of well-paid paternity leave in 2007 (with take up increasing to 55% of fathers in 2009); however, extension to 4 weeks has been postponed (Escobedo et al. 2012).

Policies in these countries have not provided strong support for dual-earner parents through full-time services for children below age 3. The percentage of young children of this age in day care services is low to average (11% in Greece, 25% in Italy, 36% in Spain) and is often linked to short opening hours, revealing a *low integration of the leave system and the services system* and a concept of formal childcare focusing on children's rather than working parents' needs. Nevertheless, with the exception of Greece (58%), over 90% of children aged 3–6 years attend pre-school.

### ***The 'Early Return to Full-Time Work' Gender-Equality-Oriented Leave Policy Model***

The last model is what we may identify as the *early return to full-time work and gender-equality-orientated* model found in Portugal. Although Portugal's pathway is also linked to a weak welfare state and to the promotion, until the 1974 Revolution, of the male-breadwinner pattern, work-family policies emphasising the importance of female employment and gender equality have led to a specific process of change. Not surprisingly, the one-year-leave model also emerges as a template for work/family balance, but it is a trimmed-down version of the latter which has emerged, influenced by budgetary constraints as well as a preference for well-paid short leaves and the symmetrical engagement of men and women in the labour market.

From the point of view of leave arrangements, there is also one main type of leave (Table 6.7): *a short, highly compensated, post-natal leave of 4–6 months* (4 months at 100% or 5 months at 83%, plus one bonus month depending on gender sharing of leave with no ceiling). Designated as the 'initial parental leave', only 6 weeks have to be taken by the mother, the rest being gender flexible. The development of *linkages between gender-equality policy and leave policy* also led to the introduction of 5 days of well-paid paternity leave in the 1990s, later increased to 4 weeks (taken up by two-thirds of fathers), as well as a well-paid bonus month<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Previously (since 1999), father's involvement in leave was promoted through 2 weeks of well-paid parental leave if taken up by the father.

which depends on gender sharing of leave (if fathers take at least 1 month on their own, initial parental leave increases to 5 months at 100% or 6 months at 80% of previous earnings). The introduction of the bonus month led to a rapid increase in gender sharing of leave from a previous take up by fathers of 0.6% in 2008 to 20% in 2010. The rest of parental leave (now designated as 'complementary' parental leave) – 3 months per parent – is paid at 25% of earnings and has a low take-up rate.

Another key characteristic of the 'early return to work' model is the gradual expansion of publicly subsidised services with long opening hours as well as full-time primary school. Attendance rates for children below age 3 increased to 36% (up from 12% in the early 1990s). These coverage rates are above average in the EU and are building up a *complementary relationship between the leave system and services*.

A *decline of the male-breadwinner pattern* and an increase in dual-earner couples is another characteristic of this model. Maternal employment (68%) and female employment rates in Portugal (61%) are high, women work full time (86%) and there is a similar employment rate for women with or without children below age 6. The 'dual-earner' pattern (both working full time) is the predominant model in couples with children below age 3 (66% of couples, the second highest proportion in the EU after Slovenia), and male breadwinning has a very low proportion.

In summary, Portugal's early return to full employment model does not seem to adjust to any of the preceding models. Historically, Portugal's pathway is linked to the Southern European male-breadwinner model (Wall and Escobedo 2009). However, there has been divergence in the process of change: a stronger promotion of women's employment and the dual-earner model, an emphasis on the expansion of service provision and a stronger linkage between leave and gender equality. Not surprisingly, the 'well-paid one-year-leave' model also seems to hover as a benchmark in the policy agenda for gender equality.

As we mentioned earlier, this may be an emerging model in some countries. In Spain, female employment rates, based on full-time work, are increasing rapidly, service provision is expanding and gender equality is on the policy agenda. In other countries, an 'earlier return to work' is seen once again as an interesting option. In other words, the generating principles of the 'early return to work' model may be spreading.

## **Conclusions**

The aim of this chapter was to explore the diversity of leave policy models in contemporary European society. In contrast to other approaches, describing leave policies on the basis of leave arrangements or as connected primarily to main types of Welfare State, we have focused on the interconnections between leave systems and other policy and societal factors that shape and give meaning to leave policies. Analysis reveals three sets of conclusions.

The first is related to the issue of leave generosity and its linkages to gender equity and family well-being. Leave generosity has increased in all countries, but its meaning varies according to the leave policy model and the process of change leading to a particular model. Generosity cannot be understood *per se* with no reference to the cultural, historical and political contexts in which it emerges. Family well-being, gender equity and leave to care after the birth of a child take on different shades of meaning and have to be interpreted in the context of work/family cultures and policies. For example, generosity in the form of a longer-paid parental leave may mean that policies are shifting the leave system closer to a 'mother-centred' model or, alternatively, to a flexible 'parental choice' model aiming to include varied options of leave. The impact on gender equality of a longer, more generous leave will therefore depend not only on its design but also on its location in a specific process of change. For example, the linkage between gender equality and the introduction of father's specific entitlements depends on the model in which it is embedded: in a strongly gender-oriented model, such as the 'one year model' or the 'early return to work' models, a 'daddy month' incentivating the mother's return to work and the father's take up *alone* of leave, is likely to have a greater impact on gender equity in care than a 'daddy month' allowing fathers to take up leave when mothers are at home or working a few hours per week.

The second set of conclusions is related to the current pluralisation of leave policy models. The analytical strategy examining the embeddedness of leave systems in the complex dynamics of work-family culture and policy has helped us to understand some countries' specific and unique pathway and to identify a set of *leave policy models* in which there are similar underlying processes of change. Seven models were identified. Emphasis on gender equality, promotion of mothers' employment, support for dual-earner couples and services has tended to shape a *one-year-leave gender-equality-orientated* model in which both mothers and fathers are encouraged to combine full-time work and care for very young children. However, when gender equality and the promotion of women's employment interact with a process of change underlining the need for diverse options, the rationale of leave policy is associated with *parental choice*, a model where the state aims to provide support for working parents both through longer-paid leaves for home-based care and high availability of services for those on shorter leave.

This contrasts sharply with the *mother-centred* model in which the main policy driver has been to build up home-based care by mothers during the first years of the child's life, irrespective of whether this encourages or discourages gender equality and father's involvement in care. Family well-being in this model is seen to derive from family care and mother's specific entitlements to care for young children. However, processes of change seem to be pulling these countries into two rather different models: some have enacted a *long-leave mother-centred model* emphasising home care, low availability of services and the one-earner model when children are young while others are moving in the direction of a more *balanced mother-centred* model by offering a shorter 1-year well-paid leave as well as expansion of father's entitlements and a gradual increase in services to support

some working mothers; however, they cannot be considered as 'parental choice' countries since their pathway is still associated with some key characteristics of the mother-centred model.

Leave policies appear to take on other meanings in the setting of traditionally underdeveloped state provision of leave arrangements and services. The *short-leave part-time mother* policy model is connected to female part-time work during the phases of active motherhood with some increase in service provision to support working parents (usually attended on a part-time basis). Lastly, developments in Southern Europe would appear to allow for two models: a *short-leave-modified male-breadwinner model* which still conforms partially to the male-breadwinning pattern and an *early return to full-time work* model where the promotion of gender equality and support for dual-earner parents through availability of services are high on the agenda.

Emphasis on gender equality is not the same in the above-mentioned models. Although entitlement to paternity leave now exists in almost all the countries under review, analysis reveals important differences in the policy effort to increase fathers' involvement. High compensation for earnings and the use of varied policy instruments to increase fathers' leave – gender-flexible sharing of leave, paternity leave, non-transferable 'quotas' and bonuses – are strongest in the *one-year-leave gender-equality-orientated* model, but they are also important, even if more modestly, in the countries with the *parental choice*, the *balanced mother-centred* and the *early return to work* models. Interestingly, in order to increase father's use of leave, there has been a sustained policy effort in these countries to reinforce well-paid 'father's-only' leave (as fathers do not seem to use either poorly paid leave or well-paid 'family entitlement' to leave). In contrast, emphasis in the other three models is on the care of children by mothers, while well-paid leave for 'fathers only' has not been on the policy agenda.

The third set of conclusions is related to the issue of convergence and divergence in leave policies across Europe during the last few decades. A first remark is that the emphasis on pluralisation must not blind us to the fact that there are some important commonalities. Seen in historical perspective, all countries have shifted away from a male-breadwinner model in which only mothers were entitled to care and to a short-job-protected leave: no country in Europe conforms today to the idea of family well-being based exclusively on female caring and staying at home throughout most of married life, and all countries have paid maternity leave, some form of parental leave and are turning to father's specific entitlements. Historically, this is a major turning point implying state investment in both leaves and services (often for the under 3s, always for the 3–6 age group), a move away from dependency on male earning and total absence from caring, and the flagging up of policy objectives which take into account family well-being based on parental sharing and conjugal work-family balance, even if gender equality may be a secondary rather than a priority policy. That said, the direction of change over the last few decades may be seen to deflect quite strongly from the expectations launched in the 1970s, such as the idea of family well-being based on 'dual earning/dual caring' and almost perfect,

symmetrical gender equality in couples. Overall, leave policies have moved away from the idea of this one best model: there has been a clear trend towards the recognition of the rights of mothers to more time for care, often implying strong dependency on male breadwinning or female part time when children are young as well as emphasis on flexibilisation of leave (linked to the idea that parents have the right to choose and be major actors of the leave system). Even a pioneer country such as Sweden, which often acts as a standard model for leave generosity and gender equality in work/family balance in Europe, has undergone a specific process of change, less focused on full-time dual earning than in the past, with some acceptance of female part-time work (even if a fairly 'long' part time) and male breadwinning when children are young.

At the same time, however, the processes of change analysed in this chapter suggest that this standard model undoubtedly retains some of its influence, in Europe, as a cultural norm around which to negotiate leave policies. For example, we are now seeing some Central European countries, previously focused on long leave for mothers, questioning this emphasis and drawing on the concept of a shorter, well-paid one-year-leave standard in order to open up options and roll back gender inequality in parental employment. In summary, the historical importance of state support for working parents, with its strong linkages to gender equality in parenting and employment in the European social model, has had to negotiate new and sometimes conflicting approaches to care, making for some fluidity in the concept of leave and more complexity in the processes of change. This does not mean that the possibilities of developing leave policy models are completely open. On the contrary, we can see that they are constrained culturally, politically and historically, making for continued variation in European leave policies and producing a plurality of pathways which must be constantly examined and monitored in order to understand the changing and diverse nature of leave.

## Appendix – Tables

Table 6.1 Leave policy measures: Sweden, Iceland, Denmark and Slovenia

Countries	Maternity leave		Paternity leave (during mat. leave)		Parental leave		Tot. post-natal paid leave (months)	
	(months)	€	€	€	Total length (months)	€	Who in family	(months)
Sweden	2 months 'mother's quota'	80% max. €3,945/month	2 weeks	80%	16 months: 11 months 3 months 2 months	80% max: €3,945/month €600 Unpaid	2-months 'father's quota' <sup>a</sup> 6-month per parent (trasf. with permission) + 1 month unpaid per parent	16 months (13 months 80% with ceiling)
Iceland	3 months	75–80% max. €1,820/month	–	–	12 months: 6 months 6 months	75–80% max. €1,820/month Unpaid	3 months for father, 3 months per family, 3 unpaid per parent	9 months (80% with ceiling)
Denmark	4.5 months (1 before)	100% max. €2,060/month	2 weeks	100% max. €2,060/month	8 months 11 months	100% max. €2,060/month Reduced benefit	Per family*	14.5 months (11.5 months 100% with ceiling)
Slovenia	4 months (1 before)	100%	3 months	15 days: 100% max €3,741/month 75 days: €165/month	8.5 months	100% max €3,741/month	Per family	11.5 months (100% with ceiling)

Source: Moss (2011)

1 month = 4 weeks; 1 year = 52 weeks; 1 month = 30 days; 1 week = 7 days (except in Finland where 6 working days is considered for any type of leave)

\*A father's quota has been introduced in the industrial sector  
<sup>a</sup>A 'gender-equality bonus' in the form of a tax reduction was introduced. It offers an economic incentive for families to divide parental leave more equally between the mother and the father. The parent who has stayed at home the longest receives the bonus when she/he goes back to work if the other parent uses the parental leave for more than his or her 60-day quota period. When the two reserved months are used by each parent, for each day of more 'equal' use (typically each day the father uses), a maximum of SEK100 (€11) will be gained in tax reduction; when parents share the leave equally, the bonus is worth SEK13,500 (€1,505)

**Table 6.2** Leave policy measures: Finland, France, Norway and Belgium

Countries	Maternity leave		Paternity leave (during mat. leave)		Parental leave			Tot. post-natal paid leave (months)
	(months)	€	(months)	€	Total length (months)	€	Who in family	
<i>Finland</i>	4.5 months (2 weeks before)	70–90% max €4,217/month	3 weeks	70% max €2,741/month	32.5 months: 6.5 months + bonus → of 1 month for the father (if last 2 weeks parental leave taken by father)	70–75% (with ceiling)	Per family (1 month father bonus)	36 months (11.5 months: 70–75% with ceiling)
<i>France</i>	4 months (3 weeks before)	100% max €2,946/month	2 weeks (11 working days)	100% max €2,946/month	25 months → 33 months: If ≥ 2 child → If 1 child: → option: if 3rd or more child: →	€386/month €560/month for 33 months €560 only for 6 months €801/month for 12 months if one stops working	Per family	36 months (9 months if only 1 child) (3 months: 100% with ceiling)
<i>Norway</i>	2 months (3 weeks before)	100% max €4,648/month	2 weeks	Unpaid by state	34.5 months: 2.5 months father's quota → 9 months → 24 months →	100%; → 80% (ceiling) → €420/month →	2.5 months for father, 9 months per family + 12 months per parent	36 months (13 months: 80–100% with ceiling)
<i>Belgium</i>	4 months (1 week before)	1st month: 82% 3 month: 75% with ceiling	2 weeks (3 days are compulsory)	3 days: 100%, remain: 82% with ceiling	18 months: 6 months → 12 months of time credit system →	€666/month → €604/month →	3 months per parent + 12 months of time credit system	22 months (4 months: 75–82% with ceiling)

**Table 6.3** Leave policy measures: Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia

Countries	Maternity leave		Paternity leave (during maternity leave)		Parental leave			Tot. post-natal paid leave (months)
	(months)	€	(months)	€	Total length (months)	€	Who in family	
<i>Hungary</i>	6 months	70%	1 week	100%	30 months: 18 months → 12 months: →	70% max €546/month €110/month	Mother's quota 1st 6 months 24 months per family	36 months (24 month 70% with ceiling)
<i>Czech Republic**</i>	7 months (1.5 before)	70% max €1,285/month	No	–	30.5 months	€600/month	Per family	36 months (5.5 month: 70% with ceiling)
<i>Poland**</i>	5.5 months	100%	1 week	100%	36 months: 24 months → 12 months →	€100/month Unpaid	Per family	29 months (5.5 months: 100%)
<i>Estonia</i>	4.5 (1 before)	100%	2 weeks	Unpaid	32.5 months: 14.5 months → 18 months: →	100% max €2,157/month €38/month	Per family	36 months (18 months: 100% with ceiling)

\*\*Gender sharing of maternity leave allowed (after an obligatory period for mothers of about 6 weeks)

**Table 6.4** Leave policy measures: Germany and Austria

Countries	Maternity leave (months)	€	Paternity leave (during mat. leave)	€	Parental leave	Per family (2 months father bonus)	Tot. post-natal paid leave (months)
<i>Germany</i>	3.5 months (1.5 before)	100%	No	–	34 months: 12+2 months bonus →	67% max €1,800/ month 33%	30 months (14 months: 67% with ceiling)
					or 24+4 →		
					6 or 20 months →	Unpaid	
<i>Austria</i>	4 months (2 before)	100%	No	–	24 months <sup>a</sup> 20+4 months bonus or 15+3 →	€624/month	24 months (2 months: 100%; 14 months: 80% if earnings between €1,000–2,000/ month)
					or 12+2 (if earnings <1,000) or →	€800/month	
					12+2 (if earnings 1,000–2,000) →	€1,000/month	
						80%	

<sup>a</sup>In Austria, there is another payment option (€436 a month for 30 months or for 36 months if both parents apply for the payment – 30+6 option) which we have excluded since parental leave may only be taken until the child is 24 months. Both parents cannot take leave at the same time except for one month the first time they alternately leave. In that case parental leave ends one month earlier (i.e. one month before the child's second birthday)

**Table 6.5** Leave policy measures: United Kingdom, Ireland, Switzerland and The Netherlands

Countries	Maternity leave (months)	€	Paternity leave (during mat. leave)	€	Parental leave			Tot. post-natal paid leave (months)
					Total length (months)	€	Who in family	
<i>United Kingdom**</i>	12 months	1.5 month: 90% 8 month: €580/ month 4 month: unpaid	2 weeks	€145/week	6 months (max 1 month per year)	Unpaid	3 months per parent	9.5 months (1.5 month: 90%)
<i>Ireland</i>	10.5 months (2 weeks before)	6.5 month: 80% max €1,048/ month 4 month: unpaid	no	–	7 months	Unpaid	3.5 months per parent	6.5 months (80% with ceiling)
<i>Switzerland</i>	3.5 months	80% max €5,740/ month	no	–	No	–	–	3.5 months (80% with ceiling)
<i>Netherlands</i>	4 months (1 before)	100% with ceiling	2 days	100% (paid by employer)	12 months part time	Tax reduction of €712/ month	6 months per parent	15 months (3 months: 100% with ceiling)

\*\*Gender sharing of maternity leave allowed (after an obligatory period for mothers of about 6 weeks)



**Table 6.6** Leave policy measures: Italy, Greece and Spain

Countries	Maternity leave (months)	€	Paternity leave (during mat. leave)	€	Parental leave			Total post-natal paid leave (months)
					Total length (months)	€	Who in family	
<i>Italy</i>	5 months (1 before) →	80–100%	No	–	10 months	30%	6 per parent (max 10)	14 months (4 months: 80%)
<i>Greece Pub. sector</i>	5 months (2 before) →	100%	No	–	48 months →	Unpaid (if ≥ 3rd child 3 months are paid by employer) →	24 months p/parent	12 months (100%)
<i>Priv. sector</i>	4 months (2 before) → + 3 months <sup>b</sup> → + 6 months (special leave) →	100% Paid by employer Min. wage	2 days paid by employer		9 months <sup>a</sup> → 7 months →	100% →	Per family 3.5 months per parent	11 months (2 months: 100%)
<i>Spain**</i>	4 months + 2–4 weeks <sup>c</sup>	100% max €3,230/month	15 days	100% max €3,230/month	Up to 36 months per parent (until child is 3)	Unpaid (flat rate in some regions per family under n conditions)		4–5 months (100% with ceiling)

<sup>a</sup>Employees are also entitled to take 'alternative use of reduced hours as leave for the care of children' lasting nine months paid as working time with no ceiling

<sup>b</sup>After basic leave and before special leave, employees are also entitled to take 'alternative use of reduced hours as leave for the care of children' lasting a maximum of about three months paid as working time with no ceiling

<sup>c</sup>Employed mothers can take reduction in working time as full-time leave for two to four weeks

\*\*Gender sharing of maternity leave allowed (after an obligatory period for mothers of about 6 weeks)

**Table 6.7** Leave policy measures: Portugal

Country	Initial parental leave (months)	€	Paternity leave (during mat. leave)	€	Parental leave			Total post-natal paid leave (months)
					Total length (months)	€	Who in family	
Portugal	5 months + 1 month bonus if gender sharing ('daddy month')	80% (or 4 + 1 at 100%)	20 days (10 compulsory)	100%	6 months → + 24 months → special leave	25% → Unpaid →	3 months per parent, Per family	12 months (5–6 months: 80%)

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